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## **City of Middletown Celebrates Earth Day**

Federal environmental officials joined town and state officials in Middletown, Conn. Saturday to announce the start of the community's Zero Waste Initiative.

At the same time, town leaders recognized 13 businesses who were named 2011 Green Business Recycling Heroes for their commitment to reducing the amount of waste produced and increasing the amount of waste reused or recycled.

The ceremony was led by Krishna Winston, chair of the Middletown Recycling Committee. Mayor Dan Drew recognized local businesses and organizations that are committed to reducing, reusing and recycling. The award plaques, which were created from recycled materials, were designed by Middletown High School students.

In a letter of appreciation to the mayor, Commissioner Daniel Esty of the Conn. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection thanked Middletown for its commitment to adopting a zero waste philosophy.

"Your progressive approach to materials management is a model for the rest of the state," Esty wrote.

Jeri Weiss, recycling coordinator at the New England office of the US Environmental Protection Agency, thanked Middletown for its willingness to be one of 13 communities nationally to participate in a zero waste pilot program and work with EPA toward achieving zero waste. Zero waste doesn't mean that nothing will be discarded, but it's a declaration of policies and commitment to embrace and expand on the three R's; Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, Weiss explained.

Zero waste policies and programs make good business sense, according to Weiss. For every 10 tons of materials that are thrown away, one job is created. In comparison, 10 jobs are created for the same amount of materials recycled.

All businesses want to manage their resources wisely, Weiss noted. By participating in Middletown's zero waste efforts and by recognizing local heroes, the Middletown business community, in partnership with town government, is demonstrating its leadership in this area.

The 2011 Green Business Recycling Heroes were:

- Sweet Harmony Café
- Russell Library
- Wesleyan University
- Amici Italian Grill
- Arcadis U.S. Inc.
- ArtFarm
- Book Bower
- Centerpoint Connecticut
- Citizens Bank
- Moving Pictures Inc.
- Network-It LLC
- The Day Club Adult Center
- Youngs Printing.